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WHAT IS DEFENSIVE WAR?

To this question the answers are various and quite vague. "I perfectly agree with you," says one, 'as to the horrors and barbarity of war, and I unhesitatingly condemn aggressive wars, but cannot see that defensive war is wrong.' We hear the same thing repeated over and over again; ministers of the gospel, men of education, thought and benevolence, are all ready to say "Defensive war is right, but aggressive war is wrong;" and with this avowal they persuade themselves that they are on the side of humanity and Christianity.

Let us look at the logic of their position. The terms in which this oft-repeated assertion is couched are very vague. The question immediately arises as to what is offensive and what is defensive war. We look to the supporters of "defensive war" for a clear definition in vain. Never was there such a confusion of opinion on any subject as on this. Every one has his peculiar interpretation, according to circumstances.

Look at actual events. We hear of wars and rumors of wars, and anxiously enquire which are the aggressive and which the defensive wars. In America we see the North fighting *in defence* of their free constitution, the integrity of the republic, for freedom against slavery; and we say surely this is defensive war. We turn to the South; but they declare loudly that they are fighting *in defence* of their independence, of their hearths, and homes, and property. We look to New Zealand, where preparations for bloodshed are going forward on a large scale; on the one side for *defending* colonial rights and privileges, and even life itself, against 'barbarian marauders'; on the other side, a fine native race seek *to defend* themselves in possession of their native inheritance, and to prevent the alienation of their lands, to protect themselves against threatened confiscation and "extermination." Perplexed and puzzled, we proceed to consider the matter of Japan. Here is a large naval and commercial power laying cities in ruin *in defence* of the rights of treaty, the existence of commercial relations, and the safety of the lives of British subjects, the honor of the British flag. So the Japanese are fighting *in defence* of their ancient customs and rights, invaded by strangers — in defence of life and property, assailed from without. No nearer the solution of the question, we take a glance at China, at Mexico, at Poland, and at Holstein, but nowhere can we find any "aggressive wars." All maintain with plausibility and much reason, that *they are only* waging defensive war — *London Her. of Peace.*

PROFESSORS OF RELIGION IN COLLEGES.—*Their Number diminished by the Rebellion.* — At the last annual concert of prayer for colleges, it was stated, as the result of careful and extended inquiry, that "during the war the number of professing Christians in the colleges fell from about two thousand eight hundred, to something less than two thousand; but now in New England alone there were in the colleges two thousand five hundred hopeful converts, and there is reason to believe that the number is on the increase." A summary of very significant facts, showing clearly how

extensively and suddenly all warlike operations, however necessary and justifiable we may deem them, affect the spiritual as well as the temporal interests of mankind. A decrease in our colleges of professed Christians nearly one third in less than four years.

Still worse, in all probability, were the malign influences of the late rebellion on the general interests of religion through the land. On this point both the religious press and ecclesiastical bodies have been studiously silent; but we trust that the real facts will yet be brought before the Christian community to show them the inevitable effects on men's spiritual interests of all military operations. We fear, too, that the proportion of pious students in our colleges studying for the Christian ministry will be found ere long, if not already, much less than in former years. Our people may not now be in a mood to consider fully or fairly such pregnant facts; but the time is coming when they *will* be examined with care, and have their influence in spreading a wider and deeper dread of war in all its forms.

LIGHT BEYOND THE RIVER.

There is a light beyond the river,
Where the surges cease to roll,
There is peace and joy forever
For the tempest beaten soul;
Tears are changed for smiles of gladness,
Pain and sorrow come no more,
Never thought of care and sadness,
Haunts the dweller on the shore.

Here the way is often dreary,
Clouds of darkness fold us round,
Hearts grow faint and feet get weary,
Toiling o'er the rugged ground;
Yonder where the light is shining,
There is rest from toil and strife;
And beside that pathway shining,
Blossom flowers of endless life,

Here are doubts and gloom and sighing;
Brightest joys the soonest fade;
Those we love are dead and dying;
In the dust our hopes are laid.
There the light of truth shines clearly,
Joys supernal gild the way,
Those we love so well and dearly,
From our side shall never stray.

Mourner, are the earth-ties broken?
From thy life has brightness fled?
Fondest farewells hast thou spoken,
O'er the forms now chilled and dead?
See, a radiant brightness streaming
O'er the river's swelling tide,
Woos thee to the height that's beaming
Yonder on the farther side.

Christian, let thine eye be ever
Fixed upon that shining goal,
On the light beyond the river,
Where no raging billows roll.
There behold the radiant portal
Of the realm of endless day.
From the land of the Immortal
Beams a light — ne'er fades away.